



COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM
PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED
August 1, 2008

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Dear Federal Colleague:

In an effort to inform the public about issues related to disability and employment, Congress and the President recognize October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year marks the 20th anniversary of this initiative, and I am pleased to provide you with the AbilityOne National Disability Employment Awareness Month toolkit. Our theme is "Put Ability to Work for You."

The AbilityOne (formerly known as Javits-Wagner-O'Day or JWOD) Program is a priority source of supply for the federal government. It enables people who are blind or have other severe disabilities to obtain employment through federal procurements. More than 3,000 quality products and services are provided to meet government requirements. As a result, the AbilityOne Program currently employs more than 40,000 individuals at over 600 community-based nonprofit agencies nationwide. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an exceptional time to promote the program and we ask that you celebrate and recognize supporters in your organization.

On February 11, 2008, President George W. Bush sent a memorandum to the heads of all executive departments and agencies titled *Federal Support for the AbilityOne Program* (copy included in this toolkit). In his memorandum, the President said strong federal support is critical to fulfilling the AbilityOne employment mission, and he encouraged federal personnel to meet their acquisition needs by purchasing AbilityOne products and services.

As a follow-up to the President's memorandum, we hope you will use the enclosed toolkit to increase awareness of this important federal program and share it within your agencies. Throughout the year other opportunities to increase awareness may include highlighting new AbilityOne contract awards with ribbon-cutting ceremonies, providing VIP tour visits to nonprofit agencies, and recognizing AbilityOne and federal employees with award presentations. These all offer an opportunity to educate the federal workforce and to develop new business opportunities for this unique federal procurement program.

As President Bush said, "Americans with disabilities make valuable contributions to our country's workforce...Expanding employment opportunities...will help ensure that our economy is drawing on the talents and creativity of all its citizens and that America remains a place of opportunity for all." We appreciate your efforts to use National Disability Employment Awareness Month as a special opportunity to recognize the AbilityOne Program and the people it employs in support of you, our federal customers.

Thank you for helping us "Put Ability to Work for You!"

Sincerely,

E. Ballard
Executive Director